UNITED NATIONS

DIVISION FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

June 1995

Volume XVIII, Bulletin No. 6

Contents

		Page
I.	Twelfth United Nations North American NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, from 19 to 21 June 1995	1
II.	United Nations Seminar on Palestinian Administrative, Managerial and Financial Needs and Challenges held at Paris from 28 to 30 June 1995	2
III.	Excerpt from G-7 Chairman's statement adopted at the G-7 Summit held at Halifax from 15 to 17 June 1995	4
IV.	Excerpts from press release issued by Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its fifty-fifth session held at Riyadh on 11 June 1995	4
V.	Excerpts from Communiqué adopted at the Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries held at Bandung, Indonesia from 17 to 25 April 1995	5
VI.	Japan announces contribution of $2 million to help UNRWA move headquarters from Vienna to Gaza	6
VII.	Non-governmental organizations: activities and information	7

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I. TWELFTH UNITED NATIONS NORTH AMERICAN NGO SYMPOSIUM ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE HELD AT UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK, FROM 19 TO 21 JUNE 1995

The twelfth United Nations NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine for the North American region was held under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, at United Nations Headquarters, New York, from 19 to 21 June 1995, pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 49/62 A and B of 14 December 1994.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and head of the delegation; Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodriguez Parilla (Cuba), Vice-Chairman of the Committee; Mr. Ravan A.G. Farhadi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman of the Committee; and Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee.

The Symposium was attended by more than 200 participants. Seventy-three non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were represented, among them a number of new organizations attending a North American NGO Symposium for the first time. Sixteen governments attended the meeting as observers.

At the opening of the Symposium, statements were made by Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé, Dr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, who delivered a message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Chairman of the Palestinian Authority; and Mr. Larry Ekin, Chairman of the North American Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (NACC).

The theme of the Symposium was "the United Nations on its 50th Anniversary and the Question of Palestine".

Experts made presentations at three plenary sessions, as follows:

A. Challenges to peace: obstacles and opportunities

Reverend Alex Awad, Lecturer at Bethlehem Bible College and Pastor of the East Jerusalem Baptist Church

Mr. Michael Warshawski, Founder and Director of the Alternative Information Center, Jerusalem

Ms. Leila Zachariah, Executive Director of Association Najdeh, Beirut

Mr. Avigdor Feldman, Lawyer, human rights activist and founder of B'Tselem

B. Working towards self-determination and promoting civil society

Mr. Raji Sourani, Lawyer and human rights activist

Ms. Suha Hindiyeh-Mani, Director and founder of the Women's Studies Center, East Jerusalem

Mr. Shafiq Masalha, Clinical Psychologist and Acting Director of the Palestinian Counselling Center, East Jerusalem

C. Continuing commitment of NGOs on the Question of Palestine

Dr. Haider Abdel Shafi, President of the Red Crescent Society

Mr. Larry Ekin, Chairman of the North American Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine

Ms. Maria Gazi, Vice-Chairman of the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine

Among the topics discussed in workshops by eight experts were the following:

1. Refugees and the displaced.
2. Settlements.
3. Status of Jerusalem.
4. Securing respect for international humanitarian law.
5. Mobilizing Palestinian women.
6. Promoting civil society.
7. Development: putting people first.
8. Labour in transition.

At the close of the Symposium, statements were made by Mr. Larry Ekin, Reverend Ibrahim Ayad, President of the Palestine Committee for NGOs; Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa and Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodriguez Parilla (Cuba).

The Symposium participants elected by secret ballot a 12-member Coordinating Committee for 1995-1996. Those elected from the United States were: the Association of Arab-American University Graduates; the Episcopal Church, USA; Grassroots International; the Methodist Federation for Social Action; the Palestine Aid Society; the Palestine Human Rights Campaign of Georgia, Inc.; Pax World Service; the Presbyterian Church, USA; and the YWCA of the USA. Those elected from Canada were: the Canadian Autoworkers' Social Justice Fund; the Canadian Council of Churches; and the Centre d'études arabes pour le développement.

A report on the Symposium will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

II. UNITED NATIONS SEMINAR ON PALESTINIAN ADMINISTRATIVE, MANAGERIAL AND FINANCIAL NEEDS AND CHALLENGES HELD AT PARIS FROM 28 TO 30 JUNE 1995

The United Nations Seminar on Palestinian Administrative, Managerial and Financial Needs and Challenges was held at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris, from 28 to 30 June 1995, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in accordance with its mandate.

The Committee was represented by a delegation comprising Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman; Mr. Ravan A.G. Farhadi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman, Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta), Rapporteur; Mr. Alimamy Bangura (Sierra Leone); and Dr. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine). The officers of the Committee served as officers of the Seminar in their respective capacities.

The Seminar was attended by 150 participants, among them representatives of 50 Governments and 14 United Nations bodies and intergovernmental organizations. Twenty experts presented papers on various topics under consideration and these were followed by a discussion.

Mr. Omar Massalha, Director, Coordination Unit for Assistance to the Palestinian People, made a statement on behalf of the Director-General of UNESCO. A message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations was delivered by his representative, Mr. Robert Gallagher, Deputy to the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories. Statements were made by Mr. Ravan A.G. Farhadi, Vice-Chairman of the Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and by the representative of Palestine, Mrs. Leila Shahid, General Delegate of Palestine to France and Permanent Observer of Palestine to UNESCO.

The programme for the Seminar began with a plenary session on the theme "Palestinian administrative, managerial and financial needs and challenges — the role of international assistance". Statements were made by donor countries and other governments, by intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and by organizations of the United Nations system.

Subsequently, four round-table discussions moderated by experts, were conducted, as follows:

I. The Palestinian Authority — needs and challenges of administration

Mr. Shibley Telhami, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C. (Moderator)

Mr. Ibrahim Al Daghma, Chief, Legal Advice and Legislation Department of the Palestinian Authority

Mr. Yair Hirschfeld, Director-General of the Economic Cooperation Foundation and Senior Lecturer at the University of Haifa

Mr. Alfons Calderón Riera, Assistant Professor of the Escuela Superior de Administración y Dirección de Empresas, Barcelona

Mr. Amin Baidoun, Director-General for International Cooperation, Palestinian Authority

II. Laying the foundation for a public financial management

Mr. Stephen B. Peterson, Research Associate at the Harvard Institute for International Development, Harvard University, (Moderator)

Mr. Fouad H. Beseiso, Head of the Palestinian Monetary Authority

Mr. Atef Alawneh, Deputy Head of Finance Department, Palestinian Authority

Ms. Muna Jawhary, Economist-Consultant, London/Jerusalem

Mr. Georges Capdeboscq, Counsellor, French National Audit Office, Paris

Mr. Gilles Johanet, Counsellor, French National Audit Office, Paris

Mr. Abdel Hamid Bouab, Officer-in-Charge, Public Finance and Enterprise Management Branch/DDSMS, Secretariat of the United Nations

III. Supporting the development of the Palestinian municipalities and public utilities

Mr. Francis Dubois, Senior Programme Adviser, Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, UNDP (Moderator)

Mr. Mustafa Abdel Nabi Natshe, Mayor of Hebron

Mr. Ghassan El-Shakah, Mayor of Nablus

Mr. Atef Alawneh, Deputy Head of the Department of Finance of the Palestinian Authority

Mr. Hussein Al-A'raj, Deputy Head for Local Government, Palestinian Authority

Mr. Sameer A. Abu-Eisheh, Dean, Faculty of Engineering, Al-Najah University, Nablus

IV. Human resources development and management — building institutional capacity

Mr. Robin Poppe, Programme Officer, National Capacity Building, ILO International Training Centre, Turin (Moderator)

Mr. Shibley Telhami, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C.

Mr. Bishara A. Bahbah, Associate Director, Institute for Social and Economic Policy in the Middle East, Harvard University

Mr. Musa D. Ghosheh, General Director of the Employees Bureau, West Bank

Mr. Alain Claisse, Professor of Public Law, Université de Paris

Mr. George Jadoun, Technical Programme Manager, Training Focal Point for Palestine at the ILO International Training Centre, Turin

At the close of the Seminar, statements were made by Mrs. Leila Shahid, General Delegate of Palestine to France and Permanent Observer of Palestine to UNESCO, and by the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

The final report of the Seminar was submitted to the Secretary-General and will be published as document A/50/278-E/1995/114. It will be distributed to all members of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, and will also be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

III. EXCERPT FROM G-7 CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT ADOPTED AT THE G-7 SUMMIT HELD AT HALIFAX FROM 15 TO 17 JUNE 1995

At the Halifax Summit held from 15 to 17 June 1995, the Heads of State and Government of seven major industrialized nations and the President of the European Commission met and issued the Halifax Summit Communiqué and the Chairman's statement. The following is an excerpt from the Chairman's statement (document A/50/254-S/1995/501):

> "The Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty is an important building block for peace throughout the region. It is imperative that the momentum for peace be maintained. We encourage the conclusion of peace treaties between Israel and Lebanon and Syria. We pledge our firm support for the Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles. We urge Israel and the Palestinian Authority to conclude, as agreed between them, the arrangements for elections in the Palestinian Autonomous Territory and the redeployment of Israeli Defence Forces. We also recognize the importance of the economic basis for peace, notably the need for regional integration. We reiterate our call to the League of Arab States to end its boycott of Israel."

IV. EXCERPTS FROM PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL OF THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL AT ITS FIFTY-FIFTH SESSION HELD AT RIYADH ON 11 JUNE 1995

The following are excerpts from a press release issued at the fifty-fifth session of the Ministerial Council of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Arabian Gulf (A/50/255-S/1995/504):

> "The Ministerial Council studied developments in the Middle East peace process since the Madrid Conference in 1991, which had laid the foundations for achieving peace and guaranteeing a just solution through the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and 425 (1978) of 19 March 1978 and the principle of land for peace.
>
> "The Council reviewed the progress made in the context of the peace process towards achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region, which would bring about full Israeli withdrawal from the Holy City of Jerusalem and all occupied Arab territories and the restoration of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to the establishment of an independent State in its own national sovereignty.
>
> "In that connection, the Council expressed its grave concern regarding Israel's continued confiscation of Palestinian land and its building of settlements in the occupied Arab territories, thus breaching the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, violating the spirit and the letter of the Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles and endangering the Middle East peace process.
>
> "The Ministerial Council calls on the international community and the co-sponsors of the peace process to take appropriate measures to prevent Israel from altering the demographic and geographic characteristics of Jerusalem, whose borders must remain as they were before 4 June 1967, and to ensure that Israel complies with the resolutions of international bodies concerning Jerusalem, especially Security Council resolution 252 (1968) of 21 May 1968.
>
> "The Council welcomed the recent positive developments in the bilateral Syrian-Israeli negotiations and hopes that substantial progress will be made towards ending the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Arab Golan. The Council also hopes that real, comprehensive progress will be made on the Lebanese-Israeli track, so that the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon will be ended."

V. EXCERPTS FROM COMMUNIQUÉ ADOPTED AT THE MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE COORDINATING BUREAU OF THE MOVEMENT OF NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES HELD AT BANDUNG, INDONESIA FROM 17 TO 25 APRIL 1995

The following are excerpts from the Communiqué adopted at the Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries which was held at Bandung, Indonesia from 17 to 25 April 1995 (A/49/920-S/1995/489):

"36. The Ministers reiterated their support for the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of all weapons of mass-destruction. To this end, the Ministers reaffirmed the need for the speedy establishment of a nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions adopted by consensus. They called upon all parties concerned to take urgent and practical steps towards the establishment of such a zone and, pending its establishment, called on Israel to renounce possession of nuclear weapons, to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and to place all its nuclear facilities under full-scope IAEA safeguards.

"37. In the Middle East, the Ministers reaffirmed their support for the peace process initiated at the Madrid Peace Conference of October 1991 which aims at achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East based on Security Council resolutions, 242, 338 and 425 and the principles of land for peace which ensure the full Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian and other Arab occupied territories.

"38. The Ministers noted a number of important developments in the peace process, most notably the signing of the Declaration of Principles between the PLO and Israel on 13 September 1993 as well as the signing of subsequent implementation agreements. While expressing support for the peace endeavours, they voiced serious concern at the obstacles faced to implement the agreements and at the continued tension and violence in the area which is exacerbated by the economic flight of the Palestinians. Further aggravating the situation is Israel's persistent refusal to redeploy its forces from the West Bank and its untenable policy and practice of building settlements in the occupied territories especially in and around the Holy City of Jerusalem, which have grave security, economic and social repercussions. The Ministers called for the full and scrupulous implementation of the agreements reached between the two sides, particularly the holding of elections to a Palestinian legislature. With regard to Israel's illegal policy and practice of building settlements in the occupied territory, the Ministers called for their dismantlement in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions. They further called for the speedy fulfillment of pledged economic assistance to the Palestinian people at this crucial time. The Ministers also stressed the urgent need for rapid progress towards the attainment of a final settlement and achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, particularly the right to self-determination and the establishment of their independent state with Jerusalem as its capital. In this regard, the Ministers expressed their support to the call made by the Jerusalem Committee, held in Ifrane, Morocco, 16-17 January 1995, to the United Nations Security Council, in particular the two co-sponsors of the Peace Conference to take necessary measures to compel Israel to desist from carrying out any settlement and Judaization of the Holy City of Jerusalem and any geographic or demographic changes therein, and to comply with agreements and conventions providing for the preservation of the Palestinian institutions and the Islamic and Christian holy sites in the Holy City of Jerusalem in implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions.

"39. The Ministers noted the Washington Declaration between Jordan and Israel which ended the state of war between them and paved the way for signing the Peace Treaty in 26 October 1994, as well as the subsequent agreements through which Jordan was able to regain its sovereignty over all its territories, its rightful share of water and the demarcation of its international borders.

"40. The Ministers noted with appreciation the commendable efforts exerted by the Syrian and Lebanese governments in order to open up possibilities for achieving progress, in their full commitment to peace in the Middle East, and demanded that Israel totally withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan and Lebanese territories, in implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions and in accordance with international law, and the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force.

"41. The Ministers considered that all measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying power, such as its illegal decision of 14 December 1981, that purport to alter the status of the occupied Syrian Golan are null and void, constitute a flagrant violation of international law and of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and have no legal effect. They called upon Israel to comply with Security Council resolution 497 (1981) of 17 December 1981 and withdraw fully from the occupied Syrian Golan to the lines of the 4th of June 1967, in implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

"42. The Ministers called for the respect of Lebanon's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and condemned the continued Israeli occupation of part of South Lebanon and West Beka'a Valley. They reaffirmed the necessity of prompt and unconditional implementation of Security Council resolution 425 as a prerequisite to peace and security in the region, the release of all Lebanese detainees in Israeli camps and the lifting of the naval blockade of the Southern Lebanese coast."

VI. JAPAN ANNOUNCES CONTRIBUTION OF $2 MILLION TO HELP UNRWA MOVE HEADQUARTERS FROM VIENNA TO GAZA

The following is the text of a press release issued by the Department of Public Information on 20 June 1995 (PAL/1819):

"Japan announced yesterday a contribution of $2 million to assist the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) move its headquarters from Vienna to its area of operations.

"The Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations Office in Vienna, Ambassador Nobutoshi Akao, called yesterday on UNRWA Commissioner-General Ilter Turkmen to inform him officially of the voluntary contribution, which will assist in the implementation of the initial phase of the transfer.

"A total of $1.4 million of the contribution is to be used for the construction of the office premises in Gaza, with the balance of $600,000 to be allocated for the construction of additional premises at UNRWA's headquarters in Amman.

"This latest contribution by Japan comes a few days after the United States confirmed a voluntary contribution of $1 million towards the cost of relocating the Agency's headquarters to the region. Earlier this year, the United Kingdom pledged $1 million at UNRWA's meeting of major donors and host governments which was held in Amman, and Belgium pledged an additional $30 million to finance the cost of the move. Previously, Turkey had contributed $25,000 and Portugal, $15,000 for the same purpose.

"The total contributions received so far by the Agency to cover the cost of relocating its headquarters from Vienna to Gaza amount to a little over $4 million, while the total cost of the move is estimated at $13.5 million."

VII. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS: ACTIVITIES AND INFORMATION

1. Washington Report on Middle East Affairs: Vol. XIV of June 1995 includes articles on operations of the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme under Dr. El Serraj; on a summary of statements made at a teach-in on the Israeli/Palestine issue at the University of Michigan; on comments on the World Bank Development Report on North Africa and the Middle East; and on a dispute among US Christian and Jewish leaders over Israeli settlement policy.

2. News From Within: Vol. XI of June 1995 includes excerpts from an interview with Edward Said on the Oslo Agreement; excerpts from a B'Tselem report on land expropriation, planning and building in East Jerusalem; Palestinian and Israeli NGO activities in connection with Jerusalem action week which aimed to emphasize Palestinian presence in Jerusalem; an article on a study concerning social and economic prospects for women in the Jalazon refugee camp, taking into consideration effects of the intifadah.

3. Israeli Settlement in the West Bank: Past, Present and Future, published by the Alternative Information Center, is available from AIC, P.O. Box 31417 Jerusalem (Fax. 9722 253151). The publication, released in June 1995, is a compilation of articles on the issue of Israeli settlements. It includes articles on the historical background of the policy of Israeli settlements (1967-1977); on the settlement policy of the Likud Government; on the establishment of settlements in Jerusalem; on the latest developments in the issue of settlement since the signing of the Declaration of Principles; and on the resistance maintained by the villagers of al-Khader against the encroachment of the Efrat settlement.

4. The Other Front, is also published by the Alternative Information Centre. Issue No. 323 of 25 May 1995 is devoted to the question of Jerusalem and includes an article on the movement away from a broad consensus among Israelis of the inevitable annexation of East Jerusalem; and opinions on land expropriation by Ron Kislev, Meron Benvenisti, and Danny Rubenstein. Issue No. 325 of 7 June 1995 includes articles on the results of a public opinion poll conducted by the Gallup Polling Institute which indicated that 65 per cent of Israelis did not support continued Israeli rule over the entire city of Jerusalem, contradicting the so-called consensus that most Israelis supported continued rule; and on criticism of the Knesset's leftist parties who have abandoned their struggle against the occupation in order to keep the present government in power. Issue No. 328 of 27 June 1995 includes an article on the Peace Now movement's proposal for compensating settlers faced with prospect of evacuation.

5. Middle East Labor Bulletin, the official publication of the Labor Committee of the Middle East, is available from P.O. Box 421546, San Francisco, California 94142-1546. The spring 1995 issue includes articles on Raji Sourani's arrest; on a round table discussion of former imprisoned Palestinian activists on their role in the future of Palestine; excerpts from comments by Tikva Honig-Parnass at the roundtable discussion on "The Paralysis of the Left"; a statement outlining the political principles of the newly-founded Palestinian Democratic Party; and on studies conducted by the new revisionist movement on newly-opened Zionist archives aimed at reexamining the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

6. Israel and Palestine Political Report, is available from IJPU, Boite Postale 44, 75462 Paris CEDEX France (Fax 331 48009645). Issue No. 192 includes an excerpt from Meron Benvenisti's paper on Israeli settlements in which he claims that the new circumventing roads confer permanent standing to the settlements and that the current peace process cannot stop their annexation; an article on Hamas and its response to planned Palestinian elections; and a chronology of political developments for March/April 1995.

7. ADC Times, published by the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, is available from 4201 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20008. The magazine reviews various issues of concern to Arab-Americans.

8. Article 74, published by the Alternative Information Center/Project for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights, is available from P.O. Box 31417, Jerusalem (Fax 02 253151). Issue No. 13 of June 1995 includes an article analysing the demographic data of Palestinians living in Jordan; on the Jordanian policy providing Palestinians with the "right of choice"; on UNRWA funding of Palestinian refugee camps; on the problems encountered at negotiations held between the Jordanian delegation and the European Union, United States and Israel on Palestine refugees and displaced persons; on a Palestinian NGO workshop discussion of refugees' future; and on the Israeli Interior Ministry's policy of confiscating Jerusalem identity cards.

9. Gaza Centre for Rights and Law, an affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists-Geneva, has

publications which are available from the Gaza Centre located at Imam Building, Rimal, Gaza Strip, (Fax. 07 866287). The following are recent releases:

(a) Report on Practices of the Israeli Occupying Authorities for the period 18 May 1994 to 18 May 1995. This paper offers a comprehensive survey of the developments in the Gaza Strip since the redeployment of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) in May 1994. It includes a report on Palestinians killed and injured by members of the IDF; economic effects of closures; working conditions of Palestinian workers; effects of restrictions on movements on students attending West Bank universities, on Palestinian trucks and taxis transporting passengers and agricultural products between Gaza and Israel, on medical care, especially for patients needing urgent medical treatment; the plight of Gaza detainees who are kept in a prison in Gosh Gatif; IDF practices inside Palestinian autonomous areas in violation of the Cairo Agreement, including entry into the area and arrests of Palestinians, demolitions and bulldozing of Palestinian property, firing of arms, and sealing off of roads.

(b) Press releases issued during the months of May and June:

* Multi-Detention Center, A Phenomenon Giving Rise to Queries by Gaza Centre for Rights and Law

* Appeal to Public Opinion: Release The Palestinian Detainees/Prisoners!!!

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